

**Indiana Commission for Early Learning and School Readiness
Meeting Minutes for August 24, 2004**

I. Welcome and Opening Remarks

Dr. Suellen Reed welcomed the Commission. A quorum was present. Commission members in attendance included:

Dr. Suellen Reed, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Rushville, co-chair
Mary Downes, Governor's Chief of Staff, South Bend, co-chair
Rep. Ralph Ayres, Chesterton, representing the House of Representatives
Sen. Gary Dillon, Columbia City, representing the Senate
Sen. Connie Sipes, New Albany, representing the Senate
Cheryl Sullivan, Indianapolis, ex-officio, non-voting member (FSSA)
Patricia G. Burton, Indianapolis, representing public school principals
Dr. Wendy Robinson, Fort Wayne, representing public school superintendents
Dr. Ena Shelley, Indianapolis, representing teacher training programs
Robert Marra, Noblesville, ex-officio, non-voting member, (Dept. of Education)
Mary E. Davis, Richmond, representing full-day kindergarten teachers
Dr. Denna Renbarger, Lapel, representing directors of preschool cooperatives
Dr. Brent Leichty, Bourbon, representing parents
Marlane Rae Tisdale, Indianapolis, representing local school boards
Lynn Silvey, Pendleton, representing parents
Dr. Kay Harmless, Indianapolis, representing the Indiana Child Care Fund
Kim Dodson, Westfield, representing children with disabilities
David Holt, Indianapolis, representing business
A. Nanette Bowling, Kokomo, representing Head Start providers
Evelyn Ridley-Turner, Indianapolis, ex-officio, non-voting member (Dept. of Correction)
Dr. Gregory Wilson, Indianapolis, ex-officio, non-voting member (Dept. of Health)
Dianna Wallace, New Castle, representing the IN Assoc. for the Ed. of Young Children
Debbie Beeler, Mitchell, representing communities
Dr. Carol Touloukian, M.D., Bloomington, representing pediatricians
Gwen Long-Lucas, Hamilton County, representing "Y" early childhood programs

Dr. Reed asked for approval of the July meeting minutes. Dr. Carol Touloukian moved to accept the minutes, and there was a second. Debbie Beeler asked for a correction in the minutes to say "Nanette Bowling" instead of Annette Bowling. The Commission voted to approve the minutes

Dr. Reed mentioned that Dr. Ganser and the Early Childhood Systems Comprehensive Grant would be holding Community Forums in August and early September, and listed the dates for those forums around the state.

Cheryl Sullivan spoke to the Commission about the Building Strong Beginnings institute that was available to the public. Cheryl asked about posting the workshop information on the

ELSRC website. (Note: Ted Maple attempted to post the information, but found that the workshops were already filled, and online enrollment was no longer open.)

II. ELSR Commission Work Plan – PreK-Kindergarten Strand

Mary Downes reviewed the focus areas of last month's meeting PreK and Kindergarten. She "looped" back to the priorities Commission members decided on during the July meeting, which were: (1) supporting full day Kindergarten for all children, (2) improving the quality and coordination of early education and school readiness services, and (3) ensuring access for all children to high quality programs.

Mary introduced Dr. Lanier DeGrella, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Child Development, to give an update on the status of childcare in Indiana. Dr. Degrella spoke about the different types of childcare, licensing, and current numbers of children served. The handout that summarizes this information can be found on the ELSRC website at www.in.gov/elsrc/meetings.html.

Since CCDF budget is being reduced, Dr. Degrella mentioned that fewer children would be served. Mary Downes asked Lanier to explain the Step-down process, and Dr. Degrella responded that slots decreased through attrition (79 per week). The waiting list continuously climbs.

Nanette Bowling asked about comments regarding the swipe card. Dr. Degrella stated that it has been a challenge to rollout statewide. Some counties are more comfortable with the process than others. Providers appreciate being paid quickly and on time. Challenges include: who is responsible for what, how to use the swipe card, and the time it takes to implement.

Carol Touloukian asked about the number of children cared for by unlicensed and unregistered day care centers and about the number of families losing their vouchers. Dr. Degrella said there is no way to know because of the lack of requirement to register or to license for many preschools and other situations. The step-down process was a way to avoid the problem of parents losing their vouchers.

Cheryl Sullivan clarified some funding issues and reminded the Commission that reduction in funding was not at the state level, instead a reduction of available federal dollars. The states no longer have the discretionary money that was used by Indiana for childcare assistance. The new block grant format has changed this to a set amount of money.

Carol Touloukian talked about the need to find unlicensed and unregistered childcare if one of the issues for the Commission is "quality." Dianna Wallace said that there used to be a preschool registration process with the Department of Education before 1990. Lanier Degrella talked about legislation proposed last year about registration of preschools with the Bureau of Child Development, but did not go very far.

Brent Leichy asked for clarification about registered ministries, and Dr. Degrella explained that these organizations are much less regulated than licensed childcares. Minimal health and safety expectations are required of registered ministries.

Mary introduced Dianna Wallace to give overview of EC professional development. Dianna provided handouts from the Indiana Association for the Education of Young Children (IAEYC), which can be found on the ELSRC website in the “Commission Meetings” section. Dianna reviewed the handouts and provided a snapshot of what is going on in the state regarding professional development

Dianna Wallace suggested high school tracks that would focus on careers in early childhood education. She described the movement in the state to train providers who have been awarded the Child Development Associate (CDA) credential. The T.E.A.C.H. project has provided scholarships for this training. Over 4,800 scholarships have been awarded in Indiana. This year T.E.A.C.H. is launching a bachelor’s degree scholarship.

Ms. Wallace spoke about the need for consistency with teacher licensure in Indiana, articulation for transition from associate’s degree in early childhood to a bachelor’s degree in a higher ed institution, and examining the difference between those who are caring for our children and the children themselves (demographics). Policies are needed to increase the cultural and linguistic diversity of early childhood professionals. Policies are needed to support and reward early childhood educators for achieving higher levels of education and specialized training. Some policy recommendations are listed on Ms. Wallace’s handout.

Dr. Reed asked Dianna Wallace about similarity to a “career lattice” that was put in place several years ago. Dianna responded that the issues she spoke of regarding professional development are consistent with the work that had been done for the career lattice. Cheryl Orr talked about the Commission for Higher Education’s involvement in pushing for articulation between associate and bachelor degrees.

Sen. Sipes asked about those with early childhood degrees working in the area of preschool due to salaries between \$16,000-\$20,000 per year. Dianna listed several entities that would require the bachelor’s degree (Head Start, public schools, etc.). She stated that teacher compensation was a concern that many states have addressed, and could be explored by the Commission.

Sen. Sipes asked about the typical salary of a Head Start teacher. Nanette Bowling answered Sen. Sipes’ question about Head Start, and said it depends on the geographic area, center itself, and grantee. For example, in some areas, Head Start teachers make the same as other beginning teachers. In many other cases, Head Start teachers make much less.

Debbie Beeler stated that 50% of Head Start teachers must have associates degree or higher by September 30, 2004. When asked how much teachers with associate degrees typically make, Debbie responded that in her community these individuals make about \$9.35 per hour. Nanette Bowling recommended that the Commission members examine teacher salaries.

Dr. Reed mentioned that there are a large number of elementary teachers looking for jobs. Dr. Ena Shelly said that with many students it is a financial matter. Most teachers with \$80,000 in student loans will not seek a job that pays \$9.35 per hour.

III. Work Session / Professional Development and Reading

Cheryl Orr introduced the new work session on the “Professional Development and Reading” strand. She spoke to the need to articulate: “What is quality?” The Commission members know what this means, but the public may not.

She moved through each bullet in the strand, while describing the recommendations that have been taken from the Education Roundtable’s P-16 Plan and the Governor’s Executive Order. Cheryl reminded the Commission about the task of prioritizing, and looping back to add details to the recommendations. This information can be found on the ELSRC website in the “Commission Meetings” section in a document called “Work Plan.”

The bullet points from the “Professional Development and Reading” strand are as follows:

- **Pediatricians and others who work with children** - Provide pediatricians and others who work with children information regarding cognitive (brain) development and the importance of reading to infants and children
- **Family literacy** - Identify and promote family and community literacy efforts
- **Parental engagement strategies for early care and preschool teachers** - Provide appropriate professional development and training to help early care and preschool teachers effectively work with and engage parents in early learning and school readiness efforts
- **Reading strategies for early care, preschool and primary teachers** - Provide appropriate professional development and training to help early care, preschool, and primary teachers master effective research-based reading strategies designed to make sure all children can read at grade-level by the end of third grade
- **Reading specialists** - Provide reading specialists at all primary grade levels to assist with reading instruction
- **Formative reading assessments** - Provide formative reading assessments throughout the primary grades
- **Immediate additional reading assistance** to students with identified needs and to students not expected to be reading at grade level

*Discussion about **Pediatricians and others who work with children**:*

Denna Renbarger expressed concern about the issue of a child needing a pediatrician being a “middle class value”; many children don’t see the same doctors regularly and get their healthcare “piece meal.” She cautioned the Commission on sending out this message given the reality for many families. She urged the Commission not to ignore the others who are doing the “nitty gritty” (nurses, health care workers). Families often don’t get their information from doctors and pediatricians regarding parenting and education, but from others in the health care field.

Dr. Renbarger spoke of the research that children need 1,000 hours of “lap time” (being read to) before they enter Kindergarten.

Dr. Wilson (Dept. of Health) agreed with Dr. Renbarger and suggested that there are many other places to give children and families what they need, and gave the example of the WIC clinics and the “Reach Out and Read”. The challenge is to get the federal level to agree to fund the program. The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) is really focusing on WIC clinics.

Dr. Touloukian (pediatrician) praised the “Reach Out and Read” program, but shared the challenges of finding volunteers to sit/read in the waiting rooms and the funding for books. The program is currently funded through private grants and other donations throughout the state. Dr. Reed mentioned that the International Reading Association (IRA) helps supply some of those books.

Nanette Bowling talked about the issues in Early Head Start and Head Start. She reemphasized that these programs have medical advisory committees with physicians and other health professionals talking about the issues of Head Start children. She stressed that instead of giving up, re-education is needed. Ms. Bowling made the comment that just because pediatricians are seen as a “middle class thing,” it should not be given up on for at-risk children.

Carol Touloukian said the way that children are “seen” depends on the area or community, and its health care system.

Cheryl Orr mentioned that when speaking to reading specialists she has learned that the issue is not necessarily children who do not have books in their homes, but also those who do have books but are watching TV instead. Kathy Politz added that it is more than just having children in their laps. Often parents don’t know about reading to their children (e.g. with the TV turned off, with conversations about storyline/letters, etc.) The question she posed is: “What are those precursors that we can provide for children that will help them become motivated for these experiences?”

*Discussion about **Family literacy and Parental engagement strategies for early care and preschool teachers:***

After Cheryl asked for thoughts on family literacy initiatives, Sen. Connie Sipes spoke about the Even Start program that used to be in her school. Even Start is a three pronged-approach program, in that young children and their parents came to school and received services simultaneously – early childhood education, adult education, and parents and children together. Because it was in a school, parents in Sen. Sipes’ school became very involved in the school through the PTO, etc. Dr. Reed spoke about the funding process of Even Start (shared by public money and community funds). Last year 539 families were served through Even Start, which included 566 adults and 796 children. Both Dr. Reed and Sen. Sipes praised the success of the program.

Brent Leichy asked for clarification about the three-pronged approach, which Sen. Sipes replied to by listing: early childhood education, adult education, and child and family togetherness.

Debbie Beeler mentioned a similar approach is taken in Head Start. Sen. Sipes was very happy to get a Head Start in her school, and to have the parents involved in the school.

Nanette Bowling talked about her own situation with Even Start. Kokomo schools struggled to match the funding of the program, and had to decline the federal Even Start grant. Funds were cut back.

Kathy Politz reminded that the program involved home visits, and parents get time with children and are given support by a trained facilitator.

Dianna Wallace talked about similarity of state programs called “Parents as Teachers” and “Healthy Families” to Even Start.

Mary Davis reminded the Commission that everything takes funding, and about the need for marketing and “selling” these programs. She also spoke of a similar program in her own school, and praised the Parents as Teachers program.

Cheryl Orr and Dr. Reed spoke about how employers might offer parenting and literacy education “on the job.” David Holt talked about a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce and the Lilly Foundation on a study about literacy education in the workplace.

Sen. Gary Dillon asked about opportunities for parenting education when children are born, and Dr. Ganser warned about the problem with new mothers receiving too much information. Any new information should be connected with something else (i.e. well-child visit, preschool, etc.). Most new parents are primarily concerned with just learning how to take care of the baby.

Dr. Reed talked about program in St. Paul, Minnesota where fathers and mothers are brought in to the hospitals to see how powerful their voice is to children. Educators from the school system facilitated this program. Dr. Reed emphasized the need for something personal, rather than just giving parents “stuff” at the hospital when babies are born.

Dr. Ganser spoke about possibilities for everyone to have a piece of a priority such as “Reading to your children is a top priority.” For example, nurses in the clinic could remind parents about the importance of reading in the well-child visit

Mary Downes and Dr. Reed spoke to the need for parents to know the importance of talking with children and building vocabulary before even the reading starts. Kay Harmless asked is there a common key point for the general population as a reminder about these issues.

Sen. Sipes talked about need for parenting/child development classes in Core 40. Cheryl Orr responded that the Roundtable had discussions around this issue, and that all these issues cannot necessarily be taught in a class. Dr. Reed elaborated on Cheryl’s comments, and that many middle schools were cutting out personal finance and home-life classes from the curriculum.

Dr. Touloukian said “timing is the key.” She mentioned that it is often hard to buy into parenting until you are a parent; thus, it is hard to educate high-schoolers on these issues (parenting, child-rearing, etc.).

Debbie Beeler reminded Commission members of the obstetricians’ roles in this process. Dr. Renbarger shared positive experiences with lactation nurses.

Cheryl Orr suggested collapsing the 2nd and 3rd bullet points, as they are similar.

*Discussion about **Reading strategies for early care, preschool and primary teachers:***

Kathy Politz spoke about Reading Excellence and Reading First. Indiana was awarded a formula-funded grant through Reading First in which 21 school corporations were awarded sub-grants (52 elementary school buildings, 700 teachers, 14,000 children). The funding is based on the number of children ages 5 to 17 living at or below the poverty level. While Reading First is for grades K-3, those in K-12 special education who teach reading are also a part of this grant. During the first award period, district eligibility was determined by the percent of third graders (35% or more) not meeting English/Language Arts proficiency at the third grade level. The program requires a high level of commitment from schools. Another round of competition will be opened up in October with eligibility based on the same percentage of third graders not meeting proficiency as well as schools designated through Title I as school improvement.

Cheryl asked if the program reached down to preschool or early care, and Kathy responded that the professional development is only provided for K-3 teachers and special education, but the district has responsibility to provide professional development in their district for non-Reading First schools and to address those pieces.

Dianna Wallace spoke about focus in Head Start in professional development on literacy and reading. The Department of Education and FSSA is bringing people together to provide trainers on the Indiana Foundations for Young Children (precursors to Kindergarten Indiana Academic Standards)

Marlane Tisdale reminded about the need to look at social, emotional, and physical domains of the child as well as the intellectual/cognitive. These pieces are sometimes forgotten.

*Discussion about **Reading specialists:***

Cheryl Orr shared that the Roundtable thought it was important to have these trained individuals in every school. Sen. Dillon was unsure about the need for reading specialists, and asked if this is what the classroom teachers should be doing.

Dr. Wendy Robinson spoke about reading specialists in Ft. Wayne, and their focus on teacher professional development and modeling for the classroom teachers. They are called “coaches.” Marlane Tisdale mentioned that these specialists are abundant in Indiana schools.

Cheryl Orr spoke about the Roundtable's recommendations regarding specialists, and its emphasis on support for the classroom teacher. The goal is that every teacher knows how to teach reading.

Dianna Wallace warned about pulling reading out instead of integrating it with other subjects in the classroom. Cheryl shared that it will need to be articulated and communicated to the public in an effective way. Bob Marra talked about looking to the future and how elementary education teachers are prepared.

Dr. Reed spoke about the process of learning how to read, reading readiness, and the need for reading specialists before students experience failure.

Rep. Ayers proposed making last three subcategories (**Reading specialists, Formative reading assessments, and Immediate additional reading**) part of the 4th bullet point (**Reading strategies for early care, preschool and primary teachers**).

Cheryl Orr agreed with Rep. Ayers and with the group's permission, collapsed those bullets. After this work was done, the bullet points were as follows:

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The Commission members then worked to prioritize the strategies/issues using the “dot-ocracy,” which was employed in the previous meeting. The top priorities were *family literacy*, followed by *parental engagement strategies*, and lastly *provide pediatricians and others who work with children information*.

III. Closing Comments / Adjourn

Upon coming back together, Dr. Reed opened the floor for those who had not yet had an opportunity to speak. Gwen Long-Lucas mentioned that she was glad to be here and was learning a lot. Evelyn Ridley-Turner also expressed appreciation for the information shared, and applicability to reading instruction strategies in the prison system.

Lynn Silvey spoke about the role of parent facilitator in serving families in literacy and other efforts. She elaborated on some of the programs that were and were not mentioned earlier in the meeting.

Dr. Reed closed the meeting by thanking the members for their time, and reminded them that the next meeting will be September 28th at the same time and place.